Tuakana-teina e-Belonging Report

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2013

Open Polytechnic
KURATINI TUWHERA

Contents

Acknowledgements

There are several people I wish to acknowledge.

To Catherine Ross, Learning Centre Manager at the Open Polytechnic. Thank you for encouraging me to complete the project and believing in my skills and ability. Your guidance and academic skill is greatly appreciated.

To Ian Rowe, of the Central Hub at Ako Aotearoa. Thank you for the funding and your guidance in helping me to see beyond the project.

To the Māori Caucus at the Open Polytechnic – your whanaungatanga and manaakitanga of me during this project has been much appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to debate some of the hard issues related to supporting Māori learners. Thank you for looking after me. Most of all, thank you for taking the time to laugh with me.

To Karaitiana Wilson, Flexible Learning Advisor at the Open Polytechnic. Thank you for designing and creating the online mentoring space known as *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging*. I had a 'dream' of what this space would look like, but you made that dream come true. Thank you Chief - your technology skills are remarkable and much appreciated. In the long term our students will benefit from your gift and I thank you for sharing this will us.

Ngā mihi nui kia koutou.

Kua moea te pō
Kua hii ake te ata
Ko wai me ahau mo te ata

The night has been slept
A new dawn unfolds
Who is with me for the new dawn?

Ngā mihi nui kia koutou
Caroline

1. Executive summary

For tertiary institutions like the Open Polytechnic Māori learners are of priority for engagement, retention and success. There is evidence showing that support for first year Māori students at the beginning of their study has positive impact outcomes (Earle, 2007). Culturally relevant support for first year degree Māori students that support both the student's cultural and learning needs is the key to open doors to success for this cohort of students who study at a distance.

The engagement, retention, and success of Māori tertiary students are of strategic importance and improving success continues to be a government policy focus (Ministry of Education, n.d). Despite significant numbers of Māori participating in tertiary education the 'age-old' problem of poor retention and underachievement still remains. In order to succeed Māori distance learners need not to be isolated from the institution, their teachers or other students. The need for a sense of connection, belonging and community is a strong value for Māori and can be enhanced through relationships with mentors (Ross, 2008). Students' self-confidence is improved when they feel connected, accepted and that they belong; self-confidence fosters learning competence. When students feel competent in their learning and are confident they become more efficient and effective learners which leads to self-determination or within kaupapa Māori context, tino rangatiratanga. The fruit of self-determination is engagement, retention and success.

Tuakana-teina[1] e-Belonging is an online mentoring space for Māori students to connect and establish relationships with other Māori students at the Open Polytechnic (Kuratini Tuwhera). It is a 'space' for Māori, by Māori, with Māori, and an opportunity for Māori learners to use the principles of peer mentoring to develop culturally relevant support that not only meets the students' learning needs, but their cultural needs as well.

The aim of the pilot project is to create and evaluate an online peer mentoring programme designed to improve the achievement of Māori students who are first time first year learners at a distance through the provision of culturally relevant support. Specifically, this project will develop a cyber whare as described by Greenwood and Te Aika (2008) as a 'virtual marae' – a space where Māori values operate for peer mentoring activity to support Māori distance learners in their study.

These questions have guided this project

1. What does culturally relevant support look like?
2. Can tuakana be trained for their role at a distance?
3. Can the principles of tuakana-teina be replicated in an online environment?
4. What effect does the above have on student achievement?

The research methods were guided by theoretical positions grounded in critical theory, kaupapa Māori theory and a strength based approach (Simpson, 2008) in order to answer the questions above. An online mentoring space was designed to reflect a dual purpose. The space needed to encourage academic learning, as well as replicating the

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[1] A glossary of Māori terms used in this project is included at the end of this report.

values and principles of te ao Māori. The project was measured over one trimester and as a result both tuakana and teina were asked, through an interview process, their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes relating to their experiences during the project. They were given as much time as needed to answer questions, and were free to discuss what they identified as being important to them.

The first group of students in this project are tuakana, who are experienced learners that were invited to participate in this project. They were not curricula specific, but are students who were willing to tautoko a small group of teina. The second group of students are the teina, who are first-time first-year Māori students studying at the Open Polytechnic.

A semi structured interview (see Appendix 4) was conducted using semi structured open-ended questions to collect the data. The project was measured over one trimester. During the interview the participants were asked their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes on the topic. Both tuakana and teina were telephoned and given as much time as needed to answer a set number of questions and were free to move onto discussion which they identified as being important to them. The participants were asked the same questions but two additional questions were asked of the tuakana that were related to their e-training. Three themes set the framework of discussion in the findings:

- Theme 1:   Tikanga Māori
- Theme 2:   Culturally relevant online space
- Theme 3:   Tuakana e-training.

As one tuakana said:

> I can't wait to see where this journey takes me. I decided to participate in this project to help support and guide other students through their learning journey.

Creating a learning community based on culture or tikanga Māori provided the benefits of learning communities such as Māori, who have traditionally felt isolated and often unvalued in the hegemonic environment of most tertiary settings (McKegg, 2005). This small study indicated that the values underpinning the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* could provide the key to setting up a whānau community to give the Māori learner a sense of belonging (whanaungatanga) and a place of belonging (tūrangawaewae). The debate derived from the tuakana and teina group discussion suggests that one of the essential foundations of a Māori-centred approach to learning is to include cultural inclusivity with a focus on enabling learners to access learning resources in a manner that is congruent with Māori values, beliefs and styles of learning.

2. Context for investigation

Support for first-year degree Māori students for engagement, retention and success is one of the priority outcomes the Tertiary Education Commission has directed for higher education providers in Aotearoa New Zealand. The challenge (te wero) is to develop culturally relevant support for this cohort of students.

There is evidence showing that enhanced support for first year Māori students, particularly at the beginning of the first year of tertiary studies, has a positive impact on successful outcomes (Earle, 2007). This paper will show that engagement and retention of tertiary students, particularly Māori, is of strategic importance. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010–2015* (Ministry of Education, n.d) remains focused on increasing Māori student involvement and success. While there has been significant growth in the number of Māori people enrolling in tertiary education in recent years, engagement and retention have continued to be problematic.

For Māori students, it is important to contextualise culturally relevant support in the tertiary sector. Finding ways to enable and support students from diverse backgrounds to persist with their studies and to complete their qualifications has become the topic of much research and debate over the last decade or two (Sharples, 1989; Simpson, 2004; L. Smith, 1994; Smith & Reid, 2000).

Peer mentoring is not a new concept. The notion of tuakana–teina is the Māori equivalent of peer mentoring, but more precisely 'student-to-student' peer mentoring for this study. Peer mentoring is well established as an effective support strategy in tertiary education (Hook, Waaka, & Raumati, 2007; Keel, 2009; Middleton, 2007), and mentoring programmes have a positive impact on the engagement and retention of distance learners (Boyle, Kwon, Ross & Simpson, 2010). This online mentoring programme has been named *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging.*

Culturally relevant support in an online environment has the potential to reach large numbers of students and has application to different groups of learners (for example, students with disabilities) across various disciplines. It also has the potential to inform aspects of teaching, learning and student support practice in the open and distance learning environment. Many values, beliefs and principles of kaupapa Māori need to be replicated in the open and distance learning setting, especially through an online environment, so that Māori students can have a sense of belonging and connection to their learning institution.

3. The purpose of the programme

The purpose of the project is to investigate an online mentoring space that uses the principles of kaupapa Māori alongside the principles of peer mentoring to develop culturally relevant support that not only meets the students learning needs, but their cultural needs as well. The investigation will help identify some of the challenges Māori students face in the distance learning environment and the extent to which peer support has an impact on their learning experiences and achievement. The aim of the project is to help students complete their chosen programme of study so that they and their whānau, hapū and iwi reap the benefits of being economically, politically and socially autonomous.

4. What is Tuakana-teina e-Belonging?

Tuakana–Teina e-Belonging is an online mentoring space (whare) for Māori students to connect and establish relationships with other Māori students at the Open Polytechnic. It's about whakawhanaungatanga in cyberspace. It is a 'space' for Māori, by Māori, with

Māori, and an opportunity for Māori learners to 'be' Māori. This culturally relevant support programme was developed to give Māori learners a 'sense of belonging' (whanaungatanga) and a 'place of belonging' (tūrangawaewae).

The concept of tuakana–teina is not new, and within a kaupapa Māori context it literally means an older sibling looking after a younger sibling. However, in the learning context it has taken on the meaning of a more experienced student (tuakana/mentor) looking after and guiding a newer student (teina/mentee) in a holistic manner. Peer mentoring within kaupapa Māori is based upon Māori values and principles that set the framework for the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* programme. The programme is also informed by a number of theoretical frameworks, including Māori pedagogy, distance learning and a strengths-based approach.

A combination of Māori-centred mentoring practices and e-mentoring is the way of the future for supporting Māori learners with their learning in the open and distance learning sector.

Whāia te iti kahurangi
Ki te tuohu mehe maunga rā teitei
Manaakitia
Awhinatia
Pae tawhiti whāia kia tata
He tohu tihei mauri ora

Reach for the stars
If you are to bow
Let it only be to a lofty mountain
Nurture (our students and staff)
To assist and nurture
For within these qualities
Empowerment is born
And thus leads to tomorrow's leaders

5. Working in a kaupapa Māori context

Introduction

This part of the paper outlines the research design by describing the research methods used to gather and analyse the data. The research methods were guided by theoretical positions grounded in critical theory, kaupapa Māori theory and a Māori-centred approach. This project does not reject kaupapa pākehā methodological frameworks, but by themselves these models of research fail to account for historical and cultural influences relevant to Māori. For this reason, kaupapa Māori theory and a Māori-centred approach were essential to the research process. These Māori research paradigms do not endeavour to negate Western methodological positions, but rather respond to research issues raised by Māori and provide a lens to best understand Māori people's realities.

Kaupapa Māori methodology

This project will be informed by and conducted within a kaupapa Māori methodological framework, which is grounded in te Ao Māori (Māori world-view). This approach is the practice of being Māori – a distinctive way of theorising and understanding the world. It's about change and incorporates a practice that is pliable, easily modified and very powerful in developing the needs and aspirations of Māori. The use of kaupapa Māori as a change mechanism aims to restructure power relationships so that those involved can be autonomous and interact from this position (G. Smith, 1991). Māori have a way of looking at the world, talking about the world, and making sense of the world that is uniquely their own. Kaupapa Māori research is a process of using Māori principles to inform research. Nepe (1991) describes kaupapa Māori as being grounded in distinct cultural and spiritual knowledge that is interpreted as whakapapa.

Kaupapa Māori research has trust as its foundations, allowing the project to evolve in a Māori context with the added value of rich data being gathered in that context. It's about commitment to change and upholding those values that are important to all Māori, not just those in the research project. As such, working within a kaupapa Māori methodological framework places an onus on researchers to work collaboratively with Māori communities to address community issues and concerns in ways that are consistent with being Māori. This allows the research work to generate positive benefits for Māori (Irwin, 1994; L. Smith, 1999).

It is important that kaupapa Māori philosophy permeates this programme, and within that philosophy there are cultural principles and practices that are key elements to making this study a success. This study will demonstrate that the research is relevant to Māori and seeks to create positive outcomes for Māori learners in the tertiary sector, iwi hapū and whānau.

Kaupapa Māori method

Every Māori person using kaupapa Māori methodology will approach it differently and use a method that is culturally relevant and appropriate for their study. The method can be described as the actual tools one uses to deploy the research and methodology (Johnston, 1998; Pihama, Smith, Taki, & Lee, 2004; L. Smith, 1999; G. Smith 1997, G. Smith, 1991). For example, the researcher might bring a whakapapa model, a whanaungatanga model, a model based on a whakatauki, or a model based on a waiata or a metaphor, and then use this model as a template for their process (the way they do things) and for the conceptual model. They will bring into the research something that is meaningful to them. For example, I will view kaupapa Māori through a Ngāti Porou lens. The methodology underpinning this study is based on the cultural processes of whakapapa and whanaungatanga. These concepts will become the equivalent metaphors for the research process. The process of whakawhanaungatanga is about establishing whānau relationships by asking a number of key questions – that is, who you are, where you come from and to whom you are connected, and this in turn leads to an unspoken relationship and commitment to other people (Bishop, 1996). It becomes the metaphor of a research approach that seeks to establish collaborative narratives. Such an approach to validity locates the power within Māori cultural practices and is defined by the Māori

community itself. The power process is constituted within the cultural processes of the community.

The notion of connectedness relates to the relationships between people, space and place. It is about drawing connections between people and the environment in which they live. For Māori this form of connection could be understood as whakapapa. Connection in other contexts relates specifically to the reconnection of family ties – for example, in places where children were forcibly taken from indigenous families and adopted out as part of the assimilation process. Finding and recovering these connections requires research into genealogies and literally finding and tracing people and their movements. Connecting is related to issues of identity, place, spiritual relationships and community well-being.

The notion of manaaki tāngata is about taking a collaborative approach to research, and reciprocity. This notion reinforces the view that research must be a collaborative and reciprocal process – a time for working together and giving back to the community and whānau. It acknowledges that learning and teaching exist in both the student and the teacher.

Critical theory

The combination of kaupapa Māori theory and critical theory has the notion of change attached to it. Both are powerful change agents, as they can be easily modified in the development of Māori needs and aspirations of Māori, especially in the tertiary sector. Critical theory is relevant to Māori research, as in some ways it draws parallels to Māori research models. Māori academics (Johnston, 1998; Mackintosh, 2004; Pihama, 1993) have applied and adapted critical theory to critique New Zealand's educational system among other institutional structures. Critical theory highlights and identifies the unequal power relations that exist in society, and this theory benefits Māori, as it focuses on the issue of inequality within the education system, which hinders student performance (Pihama, 1993) and success.

Critical theory is identified by a number of key elements. First, it can be used as a tool to highlight problem areas by allowing people to gain more control over their lives (Gibson, 1986). This study helped me as the researcher to understand the problems Māori students encountered while studying at a distance in the tertiary sector. Māori tertiary students seek to improve their status in society by obtaining qualifications. Qualifications were perceived as providing greater job opportunities and intensifying life options. This component of critical theory links to tino rangatiratanga, a common goal among Māori that refers to facilitating Māori in gaining more control over their lives.

Second, critical theory involves questioning assumptions that are taken for granted and challenging many conventional practices, ideas and principles (Gibson, 1986). This is important in analysing Māori students who study at a distance in the tertiary sector by understanding how Pākehā institutional philosophies and practices are perceived to be neutral, which hinders Māori learners' success in tertiary institutions. For example, Pākehā tutors/ lecturers, policy makers and support staff believing they know what is best for Māori students, but failing to see how their judgement passes through their cultural perspective of pedagogy.

Thirdly, the aim of critical theory is to benefit the minorities who are marginalised in society because of the way that society is structured in an unjust way. Society is constructed to benefit a particular group. In Aotearoa Pākehā are the majority, and are located in a position of privilege. There are many barriers – some not explicitly obvious – that disadvantage Māori tertiary students. Education institutions and society are structured in such a way as to support some specific groups, while on the other hand marginalising others.

Finally, critical theory examines issues of race, gender and social class (Bogdan & Biklen, 2002). The analysis of ethnicity, gender and social class is imperative to Māori tertiary students' education, as these factors impinge on their educational success. Theoretically, the identification of the components Māori, female and low economic status locates Māori women, for example, in a deficit position that has restricted Māori women's opportunities to succeed.

Even though Western research methodologies such as critical theory have many advantages for Māori, a clear distinction between these research paradigms and Māori research paradigms is the element of Māoriness. The role and importance of critical theory and kaupapa Māori theory are necessary frameworks for understanding Māori education, as both approaches have common factors and complement each other. McMurchy-Pilkington (2001) argues that 'Kaupapa Māori can be described as critical theory at a localised level' (p. 173). However, we must be mindful that not many Western frameworks specifically address Māori perspectives or aspirations.

To best understand the lives of Māori people and specifically address Māori needs, it is critical to utilise Māori theoretical models.

6. The students

The tuakana are experienced learners who have been invited to participate in this project. They are not from a specific subject area, but are students who are willing to tautoko a small group of teina (student mentees). A panui was sent to these students via email inviting them to participate in the project. They were sent an information sheet that detailed the project, and a consent form. As a tuakana they mentor up to four first-time first-year Open Polytechnic students. They were asked to participate in an online tuakana training programme with other mentors prior to the start of the project. A lot of time was taken contacting the students via telephone calls. This was a most worthwhile process, as the telephone is the nearest thing we have to a 'face-to-face' conversation with students in the open, flexible and distance learning environment. Their involvement is for approximately 2 hours per week. Nine students consented to being a tuakana for this project. By the time the project ended one tuakana student left the programme due to ill health.

The teina are first-time first-year Māori students studying at the Open Polytechnic. As with the tuakana, the teina were invited to participate in the project. All students were initially contacted by phone and invited to participate in the project. This conversation was followed up by an email explaining the programme in detail. The email included an

information sheet and a consent form, which was signed and returned to the project manager. Once the consent form was returned, the teina was then allocated to a tuakana. Thirty one students consented to being a teina for the project but four students left during the programme due to family reasons, ill health and career commitments.

7. Designing an online mentoring space

Karaitiana Wilson, a Flexible Learning Advisor at the Open Polytechnic, was engaged to design an online mentoring space that reflected a dual purpose. The space needed to encourage academic learning, as well as replicating the values and principles of te ao Māori. Key Māori concepts were identified and needed to be overtly recognised in the online mentoring space. These included, for example, whānau, aroha, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga and kaitiakitanga. Using the Moodle platform Karaitiana designed a space that captured all of the above key Māori concepts to house the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* programme. The Māori space is now known as **iWhare** – a name that reflects twenty-first century e-learning, incorporating kaupapa Māori pedagogy.

8. Programme framework

Using a Moodle platform, the online mentoring space has been designed to reflect a dual purpose – to encourage academic learning, and replicate the values, principles and customs of a marae complex. To this end the online site comprises three separate spaces so that the key Māori concepts of whānau, aroha, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga and kaitiakitanga are visible and active. The three spaces are Whānau, Iwi and Wāhi Ākoranga, and they each serve different purposes.

Whānau
Whānau comprises individual spaces for each small whānau group of tuakana and their teina. Each space is visible and accessible only to those who belong to it. The whānau space has been purposefully set up to replicate the notion of whānau, whereby students and their mentors can talk about their whakapapa their learning and other cultural aspects in a private space.

Iwi
Iwi is a single space accessible to all whānau groups. It replicates the notion of iwi on a marae, where discussions, conversations and debates are held in the wharenui, and everyone is involved. The protocol for meetings held in a wharenui is very different from those held elsewhere, and participants have to learn the required etiquette for speaking. This requirement is replicated in the iwi space, and tuakana and teina are given guidelines on etiquette.

Wāhi Ākoranga
The e-training space is accessible only to the tuakana. In kaupapa Māori there are some elements of learning that are dedicated for the learner and some for the teacher. This is where the notion of tohunga (learned expert) has its place in Māoridom.

The Whānau, Iwi and Wāhi Ākoranga spaces provide a suitable online environment within which tuakana can mentor and support teina effectively. For the dissemination of cultural values and knowledge to take place within a kaupapa Māori context, the selection of 'learned experts' is paramount. Tuakana are experienced and successful students, and not necessarily studying the same subjects as the students they mentor. They are selected on the basis of their academic record and knowledge of kaupapa Māori. Tuakana must be willing to support a small group of first-year students for the duration of a trimester and available to their group for approximately 2 hours a week. They were not paid for the mentoring, but they received a koha (donation). One student who agreed to participate in the programme as a tuakana said:

> I am keen to help support and guide other students through their learning and I can't wait to see where this journey takes me.

Tuakana participated in an e-training programme before mentoring teina. The e-training was carefully planned so that tuakana were fully engaged, and the following requirements were incorporated into its design:

- It replicated a kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) context.
- It implemented Māori pedagogy.
- It facilitated online kōrero by using kaupapa Māori concepts

The e-training programme comprises six modules that reflect the above requirements at the same time as using kaupapa Māori and e-learning practices to ensure the training is successful. Each e-training module is staircased to maximise both learning and training, and the modules are interlinked, motivating, engaging and fun. The e-training had to prepare the tuakana for their role to tautoko their teina in an online environment. One tuakana said:

> It's been great to meet with other Māori learners and from the korero we are all doing really well. What I like about this korero – it's different because we talk about whānau, our whakapapa, our tūpuna. But at the same time we are helping each other with our study.

9. Findings and discussions

Introduction
This section examines the Tuakana–Teina e-Belonging data from the interviews using a thematic approach to analyse the findings and broaden discussions on this topic.

Semi-structured individual interview
Semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to collect the data. During the interview participants were asked their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes on the topic. Both tuakana and teina were telephoned and given as much time as needed to answer a set number of questions and were free to move on to discussion that they identified as being important to them. The participants were asked

the same interview questions, but two additional questions were asked of the tuakana relating to the e-training. Three themes set the framework of discussion in this section:

- Theme 1: Tikanga Māori.
- Theme 2: Culturally relevant online space.
- Theme 3: Tuakana e-training.

Within each of these themes several sub-themes emerged. The sub-themes underpinning the tikanga Māori theme were whakapapa, whanaungatanga, whānau, manaakitanga, tūrangawaewae and whāngai. Underpinning the culturally relevant online space theme was the notion of āhuatanga. The tuakana e-training theme was underlined by the training manual structure, and the notion of training tuakana at a distance. The scaling system used in this project was based on a 1–5 measure, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important.

Theme 1: Tikanga Māori

The tikanga Māori theme describes the participant's views on various Māori customs, values and principles that are an integral part of being Māori, and how important these notions of learning and culture are to the student. It is important to note that the tuakana rated the questions much higher compared with the teina. A strong position that came through in the tuakana discussions was that their successful experience as a learner and their confidence in 'being Māori' meant that they rated the questions higher than the teina, who are just beginning their 'learner' journey.

Whakapapa

Whakapapa in this educational context relates to a 'sense of identity'. In the Open Polytechnic context, whakapapa not only includes the notions of identity and whānau, but also includes a wide context of meaning and understanding that allows the student to belong to a subgroup or hapū. It's about building relationships with other students at the Open Polytechnic. Unlike a face-to-face campus, distance learners do not have the same 'connection' opportunities, and new whānau groups need to be created in a safe online learning environment.

Tuakana

All tuakana rated the notion of whakapapa as being highly important to both their learning and their cultural needs. Participants spoke about the importance of Māori identity. Whakapapa was a good starting point for connecting with other students. For two tuakana it was an opportunity to help teina 'reconnect' with their culture. A measure of the programme strongly suggests that students identifying as being Māori – that is, they know who they are, know their whakapapa, and know their tikanga and te reo (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010) – helps them to know where they are going both academically and culturally. Knowing one's whakapapa establishes a historical framework that can give students some direction and purpose in life. Tuakana A pointed out that one of her Teina (J) did not have any idea about her whakapapa because it was 'not talked about' in the home. Through online discussion Tuakana A and her whānau group were able to provide Teina J with information about her whakapapa, helping her to develop a 'sense of identity'.

Teina

Most of the teina (85 per cent) rated the notion of whakapapa as being highly important to them and seventy-five per cent indicated that the notion of whakapapa would give them the confidence to be Māori and that in turn would be an asset to their learning. During the discussion a number of teina indicated that the more they knew about their whakapapa the more confident they became in their learning. Ninety-five per cent of the teina participants strongly agreed that *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* had helped them gain a sense of identity. When students feel competent in their learning and are confident, they become more effective efficient learners. This underpins self-determination, or in te ao Māori, tino rangatiratanga. The fruit of tino rangatiratanga is engagement and success. One teina said:

> At the beginning I didn't know whether I would gain anything from this programme, but I wanted to know 'me' as a Māori person. Academically I have always done well, but culturally I was lost. My 'whānau' group in the project helped me to find my 'whakapapa' and where I belonged. I still have a long way to go, but finding 'me' has been a life-changing experience for me.

Whanaungatanga

The notion of whanaungatanga involves knowing that one has a sense of belonging. In the whānau context the family provides, assumes and contributes to the notion of a sense of belonging. As distance learners, Māori students do not get the opportunity to 'be Māori' in their place of learning and the Open Polytechnic is no exception. Whanaungatanga in this context is about providing opportunities for Māori learners to develop whānau connections and build relationships with other Māori learners so that the notion of a sense of belonging will be developed and maintained while they are studying at the Open Polytechnic.

Tuakana

Participants spoke about whanaungatanga as a whānau or family-orientated structure. All tuakana rated the notion of whanaungatanga as being very important (5 on the scale) to them, as well as being integral to their learning, and strongly agreed that the programme helped them to have a sense of belonging. A number of tuakana recorded that they didn't feel connected or having a sense of belonging when they first started studying at the Open Polytechnic, and struggled with the isolation. Participants mentioned that it was 'good' to give new Māori learners a sense of belonging because it would cement their longing to belong. The notion of connection and community is a strong value for Māori and other indigenous peoples. A tuakana made the following comment:

> Isolation and loneliness are associated with distance learning and something I have struggled with but learned to cope with in my time of study. But cultural isolation is another thing. In the first few years of study it had a big impact on me because I was brought up and educated in a kaupapa Māori context. Then *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* came along – a place for Māori to be Māori – it felt like I was back home again. Thank you.

Teina

Almost all (95 per cent) of the teina rated the notion of whanaungatanga as a 4 or 5, which indicated that a sense of belonging was very important to them and would help them with their learning. The programme gave the teina the confidence to ask questions of their tuakana, to seek advice about their learning, and to help them connect with other students who were studying the same course as them. There was clear evidence that the programme helped teina develop a sense of belonging through the conversations and discussions in their whānau groups. For some teina the programme presented an opportunity to develop the notion of whanaungatanga in a wider context. They were able to connect with their own iwi, hapū and whānau for the first time.

Eighty-five per cent of the teina who took part in the programme are new to distance learning, and ninety per cent of this group are new to tertiary education. This cohort of students indicated that *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* helped them settle into their learning a lot quicker than anticipated because they had someone (a tuakana) to 'lend a helping hand' when required.

Whānau

Tuakana-teina e-Belonging used the notion of whānau by taking the values attached to the concept of the Māori family (whānau) and using them in a learning setting. These included having a sense of whānau, to working/studying in a family environment, learning to work in collaborative settings so that all parties benefit from the joint relationship, and knowing how to be an accountable and responsible member of the whānau rōpū (group). These transferrable lessons were used effectively and were evident in the programme.

Tuakana

All tuakana in this study agreed that the notion of whānau was of significance and gave it a rating of 5 in terms of importance to their learning in a Māori-focused environment. These students also agreed that the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* programme helped them to work more closely in a collaborative manner with the different groups in the pilot. One tuakana said:

> It was great that I could not only contribute to my own whānau group but I was able to use different forums to be a part of a wider discussion group.

Teina

All the teina stated strongly that the notion of whānau in a kaupapa Māori context played a crucial role in their learning and rated this as being very important (5 on the scale). Teina stated that the programme gave them a place of protection and safety because there were guidelines or 'Netiquette' parameters on how to behave within the whānau context online. Students appreciated the boundaries. The 'rules of whānau' were evident in the project, with participants honouring the notion of tuakana–teina. There were some teina who were older in age and a number of tuakana who were a lot younger than a number of the teina. However, the Māori learners in this study understood the concept of tuakana–teina; that in this context a

'tuakana' was someone who had more learner experience in the open and distance learning environment, and more specifically at the Open Polytechnic, and not someone who was of mature age. The notion of ako was apparent throughout the project, where in some circumstances the teacher becomes the student, and in others the student becomes the teachers. We can learn from each other. A teina made the following comment:

> Like in any family there are 'rules' and these were clearly stated at the beginning of the programme. It was nice to know these boundaries before we began our whanaungatanga.

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga involves students caring for one another, and treating each other with kindness and respect. It is the fostering and nurturing of relationships between tuakana and teina in a kaupapa Māori context. In the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* context manaakitanga is about being generous with what you have – that is, your time, knowledge, study skills, advice, support and humour. Within a Māori-focused programme the notion of manaakitanga is used to maintain relationships, which in turn leads to recognising and honouring the mana of others, irrespective of their status. Manaakitanga in a face-to-face environment can be done several ways; for example, meeting for coffee, arranging study groups, or meeting informally after a tutorial. However, in an online community more challenges need to be negotiated to make this happen. The tuakana used a number of approaches to ensure that their teina were looked after. They noted whakapapa and positive encouragement to be the most frequently used strategies to support manaakitanga.

Tuakana

It was not surprising that all tuakana gave this a rating of 5 in terms of importance to their learning in a Māori-focused context. As they were willing to give of their time, experience, knowledge, and support, it is understandable that this kaupapa would be rated highly. When selecting tuakana for the pilot they had to have a strong desire to help other learners. For some tuakana it was about 'giving back' to the whānau in return for the encouragement and support they had received during their study journey at the Open Polytechnic. Many students (85 per cent) agreed that the notion of manaakitanga in this pilot helped them to support others in the group and to recognise and honour the mana of others, and gave this a rating of 4 or 5 in terms of importance. One tuakana said:

> I have nearly finished my study at the Open Poly and this was an opportunity for me to give back but more importantly to give back in a kaupapa Māori way. It felt real good to do something like this. I have been in other mentoring programmes over the year with other tertiary institutions, but this is the first time for me being involved in one that is 'obviously' Māori. Tihei Māuri ora.

Teina

As with the tuakana, it was not surprising that the teina gave this a rating of 5 in terms of importance to their learning in a Māori-focused context. Teina commented that the manaakitanga at the beginning of the programme was about connection, belonging

and getting to know each other. But as the time progressed more students recognised that the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* was also a place where they could staircase themselves into their learning with the help of their tuakana.

Tūrangawaewae

The notion of tūrangawaewae in an educational context represents a 'place of belonging'. Having a place of belonging gives Māori learners a place and 'space' for Māori to be Māori and by Māori. It is a place they can call 'home'. This dedicated online space is a place to 'hang out' together as a whānau – a place where tuakana and teina can have their own space for kōrero, and then move to the wharenui space where the 'iwi' group (all tuakana and teina) can interact with each other. The tūrangawaewae concept is similar to having a homeroom or dedicated online space that students can go to on a daily basis.

Tuakana

All of the students rated the notion of tūrangawaewae as being very important (5 on the scale) to their learning and especially when this is implemented in a kaupapa Māori context. A tuakana made the follow comment:

> The *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* programme was the first time I felt I had a **place** of belonging and I have been a student a long time at the Open Poly. Tūrangawaewae is like someone has generously given you a rent-free home so that you can look after your whānau. You take advantage of this by keeping the whānau together (that's whānau); helping to shape their identity (that's whakapapa); looking after their basic needs (that's manaakitanga); teaching them to care for each other (that's whanaungatanga); and giving them a home that they want to come back to time and time again (that's tūrangawaewae). Now that's being Māori!

Teina

The majority of students (85 per cent) considered the notion of tūrangawaewae to be of value to their learning within the kaupapa Māori context and rated this as 4 or 5 in importance. The students (15 per cent) who rated this factor as being less important (scale 1 or 2) to their learning had indicated that they were independent learners but had qualified this by saying that having a place of belonging was a necessary tool for teaching students to become independent learners, and this can take place in a safe kaupapa Māori context.

Whāngai

Whāngai involves the transfer of information from one generation to another, usually from grandparents to grandchildren. In this sense, whāngai is about teaching or gifting others knowledge from tuakana to teina. In this case, whāngai is about academic learning and teaching, inculcating new study skills, adapting to tertiary life, and starting new friendships. Whāngai in a symbolic sense represents a development of initiatives to support Māori students. Students are metaphorically adopted into an online tertiary-based whānau, provided with the necessary online resources for academic life, and encouraged by a social network of fellow students. But more than this, it is the ease of online accessibility for teina to be supported by tuakana that renders the system user friendly. Whāngai is a custodian of guardianship relationship. Tuakana are given the

opportunity to use their skills to care and nurture teina through the early stages of their tertiary life.

Tuakana

The notion of whāngai is a relatively new term used within the educational context. All of the tuakana agreed that the notion of whāngai conducted within a kaupapa Māori environment helped them to work with their teina, and gave this a rating of 4or 5 in terms of importance to their learning. In terms of the programme helping them to adapt to a new way of learning – that is, the open and distance model – this cohort of students rated this 3–4 in terms of importance. The tuakana were in agreement that because they were experienced learners the notion of whāngai was not a new experience for them, but they could see the value for first-time first-year learners at any tertiary institution.

Teina

Eighty-five per cent of the teina who took part in the programme are new to distance learning and ninety per cent of this group are new to tertiary education. Teina indicated that the notion of whāngai helped them to navigate the path of distance learning through their tuakana establishing, nurturing and strengthening relationships between students, tutors and different areas of the Open Polytechnic. One teina said:

> I needed to withdraw from one of my courses and transfer to another trimester. My tuakana was able to help me fill in the paperwork and send it to the right people at the Open Poly. I was so grateful.

The majority of students (90 per cent) agreed that the notion of whāngai helped them to adapt to the open and distance model of learning and, for many, their first experience of tertiary education.

Theme 2: Culturally relevant online space

The Open Polytechnic uses the Moodle platform for its course pages and *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* was structured in this format. As with all tertiary institutions, there are guidelines to what one can have, and not have, in an online course page. The designer of the programme, Karaitiana Wilson, was able to work within those parameters, with a few adjustments, to allow Māori learners to work, learn and teach in a Māori-centred context. The space needed to encourage academic learning, as well as replicating the values and principles of te ao Māori. Key Māori concepts were identified and needed to be overtly recognised in the online mentoring space. These included, for example, whānau, aroha, manaakitanga, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga and kaitiakitanga.

<u>Āhuatanga</u>

This section assesses the visual and cultural impact of the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* programme. Tuakana and teina were asked questions connected to culturally relevant online space, measuring how and if such circumstances affect their learning conditions. It was also important to measure the usefulness of a learning and cultural support mechanism for Māori students who choose to be distance learners.

Tuakana

All of the tuakana rated the notion of āhuatanga as being important to them and their learning in a Māori-focused context, and rated this 4 or 5 in importance. All strongly agreed, that this programme could be useful in supporting Māori learners in the open and distance sector for the twenty-first century. Collectively, the tuakana have been with the Open Polytechnic for a number of years and have participated in a range of courses, from certificate to degree papers. They stated that this programme was different in a number of ways:

- the visual impact and effect was distinctively Māori
- it used both Māori and English
- it used Māori art
- it used Māori voice-over techniques
- it made use of 'traditional' Māori colours to give an authentic atmosphere in the 'classroom'.

As one tuakana said:

> I really like the look of the Tuakana-teina as it was so different from the other OP [Open Polytechnic] course pages I have used. It wasn't the generic look that I have seen over the years. It was nice seeing and hearing real people.

Teina

The majority of students (95 per cent) consider the notion of āhuatanga to be important to their learning, especially when this is presented in a kaupapa Māori way of learning, and rated this as 4 or 5 in importance. Those students (5 per cent) who rated this factor as being less important (1 on the scale) to their learning endorsed this by saying that they were independent learners who have a preference for reading and writing over the visual artistic content, but acknowledged that there were some students who preferred this style of learning, and if this helped them to achieve academic and cultural success then 'all is good' (Teina B).

Theme 3: Tuakana e-training

The tuakana e-training is an online preparation space where the tuakana were guided and tutored through their development programme. The aim of the Tuakana e-training programme is to give the tuakana an opportunity to gain confidence in their role; to get to know and interact with other tuakana; to learn the role of being a tuakana; and to tautoko and awhi each other in using Māori-focused approach. The training 'steps' were chosen because they reflect the values and tikanga of Te Kura Wānanga (Māori Office) at the Open Polytechnic.

The following principles were kept in mind when designing the training modules:

- learning must be engaging through the use of tikanga
- use appropriate artwork
- use 'white space' on the training pages to give an uncluttered impression
- keep the word count to a minimum

- use succinct, logical and clearly expressed instructional passages
- learning must have an immediate practical application
- replicate the kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) concept
- implement Māori pedagogy in an online environment
- facilitate online kōrero using kaupapa Māori concepts
- take into account the concept of 'being Māori'
- each training module should be staircased to maximise both learning and training
- training modules should be interlinked, motivating and engaging
- the online environment needs a visual impact that reflected our Māori heritage
- most importantly learning must be fun!

e-Training manual

Six e-training modules (see Appendix 3) were identified for the programme. These encapsulated the principles outlined above, while at the same time applying kaupapa Māori and e-learning practices to make this journey work for Māori learners. The six modules in the training manual were:

- Whakapapa – building relationships
- Tautoko – learning to support each other
- Āhuatanga – essential qualities to being a tuakana
- Whakatūnga – strengthening the role of a tuakana
- Manaakitanga – the responsibility of being a tuakana
- Whanaungatanga – developing a sense of belonging.

These e-training modules are linked to the Open Polytechnic's *Te Mahere Rautaki Māori/Māori Strategy Plan 2010–2013* (2011), which sets out keys shifts for engagement, retention, progression and success for Māori students in our institution. All tuakana had to complete each of the training modules before they could 'qualify' to tautoko teina. The tuakana had to post their kōrero to an online forum. There are three designated forums and each forum has a specific purpose. For many Māori learners, learning to 'post' to a forum is a new learning experience, and for some students this can be an intimidating and daunting encounter. By getting the tuakana to post their training kōrero online, their work becomes a learning model for the teina. This form of role modelling allows students to participate in this learning activity in a safe and supportive manner.

It was estimated that the tuakana e-training schedule would take approximately 2 weeks to complete. It took longer, however, because the students were not only having conversations about their study, aspirations and dreams, but they were also having long conversations about their whakapapa, te reo and tikanga.

Tuakana

Almost all (85 per cent) of the tuakana stated that the tuakana training manual based in a kaupapa Māori context was very important to them, and rated this 4–5 in importance. To make the training process easier for the tuakana, the manual was staircased so that all modules were interlinked, and this was important for the student training. They rated this 4–5 in importance for their training and learning. The tuakana (85 per cent) indicated that the manual was easy to use, instructions were easy to

follow, and the layout or design of the manual was 'Māori friendly' (Tuakana B). Training students to be tuakana in an online environment is a new experience for these experienced students, and all agreed that the training manual could be useful in training future tuakana in the open and distance learning sector.

Training at a distance

Finding the time and place to train tuakana was always going to be complicated, given that they are spread throughout Aotearoa. Training at a distance was always going to have its logistical and technical difficulties, but with the right technical advice the training advanced smoothly. The distance factor needed to reflect a 'classroom environment' to encapsulate the teaching and learning required to become effective tuakana. The students were given a timeframe to complete their training.

Tuakana

Distance learning is about students studying in their own time, at their own pace, in their own place. The majority of students (85 per cent) considered that it was important for them to train in their own time, from their home, and at their own pace. All tuakana considered the training interaction with other tuakana and online discussions to be a very important aspect of their training, as it developed the whanaungatanga process of their training. They rated this as 4 or 5 in importance for their training and learning. All strongly agreed, that the training programme could be useful in training future tuakana in the open and distance learning environment. Some of the tuakana statements were:

> I was so pleased that I could do the training from home, as I have young children. I didn't feel any pressure to get through the training, but was allowed to do this at my own pace. I really liked reading other tuakana comments. I learnt a lot.

> I liked the way the training was done. It allowed me time to gather my thoughts and then place a 'blog' or comment. The only comment I would make to improve the training is perhaps they have links to other mentoring programmes. Are there any other indigenous programmes I could read about?

> I am so pleased I didn't have to leave home for the training, as I am so busy at work, but I wish I could have met the tuakana at a marae noho after the programme finished.

10. Conclusion

This study explored the possibility of developing the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging*

programme to support Māori learners who study at a distance in the tertiary sector. The investigation identified some of the challenges Māori students face in the distance learning environment and the extent to which peer support has an impact on their learning and cultural experiences and achievement.

Recently there has been a significant growth in the number of Māori participating in tertiary education, but this has not always been the case. History shows that the marriage between Māori and education has been a turbulent affair over the years, with

both parties reluctant to move quickly to resolve the complicated relationship. To save this marriage, many parties recognised the need for a change in direction – not just for Māori, but for all New Zealanders.

Creating a learning community based on culture or tikanga Māori provided benefits for the members of the Māori learning community, who have traditionally felt isolated and often undervalued in the monocultural environment of most tertiary settings (McKegg, 2005). This small study indicated that the values underpinning the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* programme could provide the key to setting up a whānau community to give the Māori learner a sense of belonging (whanaungatanga) and a place of belonging (tūrangawaewae). Māori learners (in fact all learners) need an environment in which they feel culturally safe and surrounded by like minds, in order to make sense of their learning and derive meaning from it. Research shows that the more students are integrated socially and academically into a tertiary environment, the more likely they are to stay and learn well (Tinto, 1997). For Māori learners a holistic approach underpinned by Māori values, te reo mea ona tikanga, creates the safe place known as a 'marae' within the context of Māoridom.

For Māori to feel comfortable and valued in mainstream tertiary organisations, spaces have to be created where kaupapa Māori is the norm. The Tuakana–teina e-Belonging project, which is based on te ao Māori standpoint, provided a tūrangawaewae through which students could learn about the new tertiary environment, their culture and their learning (Anae, Anderson, Benseman, & Coxon, 2002).

The debate derived from the tuakana and teina group discussions suggests that one of the essential foundations of a Māori-centred approach to learning is to include cultural inclusivity, with a focus on enabling learners to access learning resources in a manner that is congruent with Māori values, beliefs and styles of learning. Using a Māori-centred approach to support academic and cultural learning, coupled with technology, is a step forward into the twenty-first century as 'technologies' are being described as "cognitive tools", which transform, augment and support cognitive engagement among peers … and adult learners' (Jonasssen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999, as cited in McLoughlin & Oliver, 2000). One participant in the study described the use of technology in the Tuakana–Teina e-Belonging programme as a 'cultural amplifier', because it will be 'heard' in many institutions and indigenous groups worldwide.

As new technologies emerge, educators have unique opportunities to foster interaction and collaboration among learners, creating a true learning community that develops a sense of belonging and a place of belonging (Beldarrain, 2006). The training must take the form of what Naidu (2008, p. 109) describes as a 'learning scaffold', which is a strategy that is put in place to guide student learning or training in a desirable direction, while enabling the development of desirable cognitive skills in the student. This is even more important when the training as a tuakana is presented at a distance.

11. Suggestions for practice

A small number of students (8 tuakana, 27 teina) were involved in this project which aimed to create and evaluate an online peer mentoring programme designed to improve the achievement of Māori students who are first time first year learners at a distance. The suggestions for further study and practice identified below are from an institutional perspective, in particular that of supporting Māori learners in a kaupapa Māori context.

Curricula Specific *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging*
Using the findings from this project one could develop a curricula specific *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* to give Māori learners in a particular field their own Māori support space. Psychology or engineering or horticulture, for example, could have their own curricula language, expertise in the field, and learning modules sit alongside supporting Māori learners in a kaupapa Māori context. The tuakana could be third year students mentoring first year first time learners, for example.

Tuakana Ako Mahi
A student support mechanism that supports learners through a low-tech strategy (the telephone) within a kaupapa Māori context. The learner has a 'tuakana' (mentor) assigned to them who contacts the learner during the trimester. The principles of whakapapatanga, manaakitanga, whanautanga, manaakitanga and wairuatanga play an important role to give Māori learners a sense of belonging (whanaungatanga) to their learning whānau (group) as well as a place of belonging (tūrangawaewaetanga) to the Open Polytechnic. The Tuakana Ako Mahi specialises in supporting learners at Levels 4 and above.

Tuakana Ako Rohe
The Open Polytechnic identifies Māori learners regionally. With this in mind this strategy supports Māori learners who study at Levels 1-3 and a tuakana ako is appointed regionally to support this cohort of students so that engagement, retention, completion and progression in a kaupapa Māori context is achieved. This mahi is similar to the Tuakana Ako mahi above but at a Level 1-3 context.

iWhare
This is an *online* social medium space for Māori, by Māori and with Māori. Māori learners can informally whanaungatanga, discover their whakapapa etc and an opportunity for Māori to be Māori. Information about scholarships, course information; study skills programmes; Open Polytechnic kawa; te Reo; research skills and other extensive information are made available for Māori learners.

Whāngaitanga: e-Learning to Learn
An *online* study skills programme for Level 1-3 Māori learners developed and designed in a kaupapa Māori context to give this cohort of students study skills required to study at this level. The design of this programme uses Māori pedagogy to inform the teaching and learning processes in an online environment.

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13. Glossary of Māori terms

Disclaimer: Many of the descriptions used in this glossary are specific interpretations for the purposes of this study and do not denote the fullness of meaning normally associated with the word or term.

Āhuatanga	features/characteristics/function
ako	to learn/to teach/to study
aroha	care/love
awhi	to embrace/to cherish
iwi	tribe
kaitiaki	guardian/advocate
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
kaupapa	topic, purpose
kaitiakitanga	trust/guardianship
koha	gift
kotahitanga	working together as one
kōrero	discussion
mana	power, dignity
manaakitanga	collaborative work
manaakitanga	hosting, being generous, empowering, respecting others
marae	the open area in front of the wharenui
Ngāti Porou	East Coast Tribe
panui	newsletter/information
Pouwhakataki	Māori Learning Liaison Advisor
rangatiratanga	self-determination/self-management
research whānau	participants
tautoko	support
te ao Māori	Māori worldview
Te Kura Wānanga	Māori Office
Te Kuratini Tuwhera	The Open Polytechnic
te reo	Māori language
te reo mea ona tikanga	Māori language and its customs
tē wero	the challenge
teina	a mentee
Tihei Māuri ora	the call to claim the right to speak
tikanga	protocols and practice
tino rangatiratanga	self-awareness, self-esteem
tohunga	expert
tuakana	a mentor
tupuna	ancestor
tūrangawaewae	place of belonging
wāhi ākoranga	learning space
waiata	song
whakapapa	connection, identity
whakatauki	proverb

whakatūnga	to stand
whakawhanaungatanga	sense of belonging
whānau	family
whānau rōpū	family group
whanaungatanga	sense of belonging
whāngai	to nurture/to look after/foster child
whare	house
wharenui	the main house

APPENDIX 1 – Screen shots of *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging*

1 Paepae

🗒 Who's sitting on the paepae - Ka tangi te titi, ka tangi te kaka, ka tangi hoki ahau!

2 Wharenui - The Tuakana-Teina Centre

Let's get started ...

Forums: You will see three different forums and each has a different function and you will be required to use these at different times. Please use either Te Reo or English, whichever you feel comfortable using. If there are words or korero that you do not currently understand please ask, and one of the kaiako (teacher) or perhaps a fellow tauira (student) will be more than happy to translate.

The iwi forum is an open space for iwi (both tuakana and teina). This is the area to post your whakapapa, a place to discuss topics of interest and to interact with other whanau.

The hapu forum is where you can ask nga kaiako/ facilitators questions; these can be about your mahi (study), scholarships, whakapapa, career advice, and more ...

The whanau forum is where the small group discussions take place. It can be likened to your own house (whare) or classroom where family or group discussions (korero) take place. These forums are private areas where the korero is between the tuakana and their teina. Each whanau will be allocated their private space (whare) to korero and you can access these under the tuakana name.

Te Maunga (the mountain) is the tuakana training centre where tuakana will find their training modules and other information to support their role.

Te Awa (the river) is the teina space where teina will find information for their role.

Mutual trust and respect

As with any good relationship the ones between kaiako, tuakana and teina are based on mutual trust and respect. Every individual is entitled to their own thoughts, ideas and opinions. It is important that we share these but to keep in mind others taking part in this exciting project.

Please follow read through the Student Resources and Support pages if you have not already done so, paying special attention to the netiquette page.

Kaiako will watch over the iWhare space, and may take part in korero within the Iwi and Hapu forum spaces. Our role as kaiako is to facilitate your relationships as tuakana and teina, however how you choose to use this space is up to you.

Make it your own, and please do contact Caroline or Karaitiana if you have any questions or concerns.

Ok let's go ...

Tuakana it's time for mahi (training) - go into Te Maunga: The tuakana training centre to begin your journey.

🗒 The Tuakana Training Centre (Te Maunga)

🗨 The Open Forum (Te Iwi)

🗨 Student-Facilitator Forum (Te Hapu)

🗨 The Tuakana-Teina Forum (Te Whanau)

APPENDIX 2 – Tuakana e-training manual

1. Whakapapa - relationship building

In order to succeed Māori distance learners need not be isolated from their institution, their tutor or other students. The need for a sense of belonging and connection is a strong value for Māori and can be enhanced through relationships with tuakana (mentors).

Students' self-confidence is improved when they feel connected, accepted and that they belong; self-confidence fosters learning competence. When students feel competent in their learning and are confident they become more efficient and effective learners which promotes self-determination or within kaupapa Māori context 'tino rangatiratanga'. The fruit of self-determination is self-confidence and academic success.

Task 1: **Whakapapa – getting to know the whānau**
Your first task is to go to the **iwi** forum and tell us about yourself/ your whakapapa. Here are some suggestions for your posting:

- who you are
- your whakapapa - your family, relations, parents, marae, rive, hapu, tribe
- what you are studying at the moment
- why are you studying
- what you do outside of study
- your interests
- your favourite inspirational proverb, saying, or verse
- who or what inspires you to study
- what does the future hold for you

This mihi should be no more than **250-300** words.

2. Tautoko – supporting each other

Peer mentoring is well establish as an effective support strategy in tertiary education and mentoring programmes and have a positive impact on the engagement and participation of distance learners.

Tuakana-teina is essentially the formation of a relationship between a more experienced or wiser person (not necessarily older) and a less experienced person for the purpose of transferring knowledge and skills.

This space is not just about support for academic study, it is also about having a space that has Māori values, principles and beliefs that support Māori concepts and tikanga, for example:

- whānau - principles of family, including whānau values, structures and practices
- aroha - care and respect for each other
- manaakitanga - mutually beneficial and reciprocal nurturing relationship
- rangatiratanga - self-determination, authority and responsibility
- kaitiakitanga - responsibility and accountability
- tuakana/ teina - senior or older person working alongside a junior or younger person

Task 2: Tautoko - time to kōrero
Using the **iwi** forum, connect and kōrero with **two** other tuakana in the forum

3. Āhuatanga - essential qualities

Apart from the obvious one of having the time available to meet online on a regular basis,

The following qualities are useful attributes in a mentor:

- possess good communication skills - an active listener
- to both support and be able to challenge in appropriate ways
- able to work non-judgementally and non-directive
- have a commitment to learning and development and are willing to learn themselves
- have an understanding of kaupapa Māori and tikanga
- able to devote sufficient time and energy to the role
- ability to build the right kind of relationship and rapport with teina

Task 3: Āhuatanga - Tuakana survey

Here is an interesting survey. It will guide you to finding your mentoring potential. Don't skip any questions and just select the answer that fits the best for you. All the best and have fun!

- When you have completed your survey post your thoughts/ whakaaro on the **iwi** forum.

  Mentor Survey
  http://www.mentors.ca/test.html

4. Whakatūnga - strengthening the role of the tuakana

The main focus of the tuakana is to help the teina but there are other benefits for the tuakana

- There is a real satisfaction in helping another personal to learn and grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- Tuakana play a part in building the future capacity of the Open Polytechnic by developing some of its talented individuals.
- Listening with empathy to the teina - seeing the world through their eyes - affords a fresh perspective to the world which may stimulate a range of insights into personal and study issues.
- There is the opportunity to practice and enhance mentoring skills such as the ability to listen and question; to support and challenge; and to be non-directive and non-judgemental.
- Many Māori students have needs that can be addressed through manaakitanga and whanaungatanga. Mentors should aim to establish genuine, ongoing connection with teina.
- You will be expected to give 2-3 hours per week to the project and participate in the forums by answering any queries, talking with other students and support other tuakana.
- The more you participate in the forums, the more you will gain from the experience.

Task 4: Kōrero mai (discussion)
Using the **hapu** forum tell us what you hope to gain by being a tuakana.

5. Manaakitanga - tuakana responsibility

As a tuakana you play a crucial role in manaakitanga/ looking after process of the teina in this project. An essential element of this kaupapa is connecting and establishing relationships with your whānau group. To make this happen:

- Welcome your whānau group into the iWhare and discussion group
- Connect your whānau to each other, that is, facilitate the kōrero/ discussion
- Encourage your whānau to connect with other Māori students in the iwi discussion group

Task 5: **Preparing your whare for your whānau** - there are two parts to this task:

Part A: In the whānau forum you will find a link with your name attached. This whare is only accessed by you and your whānau.

- Your task is to welcome your whānau (teina) to the kaupapa and tell them about yourself. This is similar to the exercise you did in Task 1 (Whakapapa). This time you 'talking' to your teina.
- Place your pōwhiri (welcome) in the whānau forum under your name.

Part B: Your teina have been guided to place their whakapapa onto your whānau whare space. Once they have posted to your whare please connect with your whānau.

6. Whanaungatanga - a sense of belonging

Soon you will be allocated your whānau (teina). Your role is to awhi (look after) your teina as soon as they appear online and begin the discussion/ kōrero process. Connecting with people for the first time is not always easy but by using our whakapapa principle as an 'ice breaker' we can make those connections with a lot more ease. Your teina are looking to you for guidance in this forum.

Task 6: Whanaungatanga – a name for your group

There are two parts to this task:

Part A - whānau discussion

- Using the whānau forum, you and your teina are to discuss a possible name for your group. The task requires you to encourage your teina to participate in this simple but important task because your whānau group will become their place of 'safety' for the duration of the project where they will share their whakaaro (thoughts) with the rest of the whānau.

- It will be up to you to encourage your teina to participate in this essential task as your 'name' will begin the process of a 'sense of belonging'. Try to get all teina involved in the discussion

- Watch and listen to the conversations. The whole group must come to some form of consensus about the 'name'.

- Remember, the aim of this task is to give your teina a 'place to belong' to their new academic whānau and to the iwi, that is, everyone participating in this project.

Part B - posting the whānau name to inform the iwi

- You now have to post your 'name' to the iwi forum. In this discussion tell the rest of the iwi how you and your whānau came to choose your name and the reasons for the name choice.
- Ask one of your teina if they would like to post this to the iwi forum.

APPENDIX 3 – Introductory survey script

Tēnā koe - nga mihi nui kia koe

My name is _____ from Te Kura Wānanga (Māori Office) at the Open Polytechnic. Earlier this year you were asked to participate in the *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* project with Caroline Rawlings and we would like to thank you for your role in the project.

We are now at the stage where we want to find out how the pilot programme worked because the Māori Office wants to use *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* as part of their learning support strategy for Māori learners in the Open Polytechnic. We want to see what worked; what didn't work; and how we can improve this programme.

Is this a convenient time with you to kōrero about *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging*? It will take about 10 -15 minutes. If not, when would be a good time to call back?

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Just to refresh your memory. *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* is a culturally relevant online peer mentoring programme for tertiary Māori students to meet their cultural and learning needs. This survey will help the Māori Office to see if the principles of tuakana-teina can be replicated in an online environment, and to view culturally relevant support in action, and to monitor tuakana e-training for their role at a distance.

This is a short survey that consists of nine questions and each question has four parts to it. Just to clarify you will not be identified in the survey and your responses will remain confidential.

Notes:

APPENDIX 4 – Survey Questionnaire

Teina - Questions 1-7

Tuakana - Questions 1-9

Question 1 **Whakapapa**

- Is about having a sense of identity

- Knowing who you are

- Finding those relationships/ connections with other students at the Open Polytechnic

- Knowing your whānau e.g. tūpuna, parents, grandparents

a) How important is the notion of whakapapa to you?
       1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is the notion of whakapapa to your learning?
       1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* has helped you have a sense of identity?
       1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

d) Would you like to comment on whakapapa?

Question 2   Whanaungatanga

- Having a sense of belonging

- A sense of belonging to the Open Polytechnic

- Used to establish relationships

- Building relationships with other student in the Open Polytechnic

a) How important is the notion of whanaungatanga to you?

<p style="padding-left:40px">1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important</p>

b) How important is the notion of whanaungatanga to your learning?

<p style="padding-left:40px">1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important</p>

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* has helped you have a sense of belonging?

<p style="padding-left:40px">1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree</p>

d) Would you like to comment on whanaungatanga?

Question 3   Whānau

- Having a sense of family

- To work collaboratively with different relationships

- To work/ study in a family environment

- To value the notion of whānau

- To be an accountable and responsible member of the whānau group

a) How important is the notion of whānau to you?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is the notion whānau to your learning?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* has helped you to work in a collaborative manner?

    1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

d) Would you like to comment on whānau

Question 4   Manaakitanga

- The principle of the quality of caring, kindness and showing respect for others

- The fostering and nurturing of relationships between tuakana and teina

- Being generous with what you have e.g. time, study skills, advice, support

- Recognising the mana of others

a) How important is the notion of manaakitanga to you?

1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is the notion of manaakitanga to your learning?

1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* has helped you to support others in the group and recognising the mana of others?

1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

d) Would you like to comment on manaakitanga?

Question 5   Tūrangawaewae

- Having a place of belonging

- A dedicated online space or building for Māori to be Māori and by Māori

- A place to 'hang-out' together with whānau

- Having your own online homeroom or classroom to go to on a daily basis

a) How important is the notion of tūrangawaewae to you?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is the notion of tūrangawaewae to your learning?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* has helped you to have a place of belonging?

    1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

d) Would you like to comment on tūrangawaewae?

Question 6   Whāngai

- Learning to adapt to a new way of learning especially around distance learning

- Learning new skills e.g. study and academic skills

- The development of a tautoko whānau

- Establishing, nurturing and cementing relationships between students, tutors, and the Open Polytechnic.

a) How important is the notion of whāngai to you?

1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is notion of whāngai to your learning?

1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* has helped you to adapt your study to a new way of learning?

1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

d) Would you like to comment on whāngai?

Question 7 Āhuatanga

- A way of supporting Māori learners in an online environment

- A dedicated online space by Māori, for Māori and to be Māori

- Navigating the online space

- A different way of supporting learners

a) How important is the notion of āhuatanga to you?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is notion of āhuatanga to your learning?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How much do you agree that this support programme, *Tuakana-teina e-Belonging* could be useful in supporting Māori ?

    1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

d) Would you like to comment on āhuatanga?

Tuakana Only

Question 8 e-Training Programme

- You were asked to go online to the te Maunga area
- Had several activities to do e.g. whakapapa, āhuatanga, manaakitanga
- A space where you got to know other tuakana
- A space to learn the role of being a tuakana
- A small staircased e-training

a) How important is it to you to have e-training in a kaupapa Māori context?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is it to you to have e-training that is staircased?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How important is it to you to have e-training that is informative and engaging?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

d) How important is it to you to have e-training that is easy to use?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

e) How much do you agree that the e-training could be useful in training future tuakana in the distance learning sector?

    1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

f) Is there anything you would like to add to the training manual?

g) Are there any other comments you would like to make related to the e-training.

Tuakana Only

Question 9 Training at a distance

- It was important that tuakana could train in the comfort of their home

- The Open Polytechnic is a distance provider and therefore e-training needed to fit in with tuakana lifestyle

- Tuakana must be comfortable and safe when training at a distance

- Tuakana must have many opportunities for discussion and collaboration

a) How important is it to you to be able to train in your own time?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

b) How important is it to you to that you could do your e-training from your home?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

c) How important is it to you that you could do your e-training with other tuakana?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

d) How important is it to you to have one discussions/ korero?

    1. Not important   2. A little important   3. Important   4. Fairly Important   5. Very Important

e) How much do you agree that training at a distance could be useful in training future tuakana in the distance learning sector?

    1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

f) Is there anything you would like to add to the training at a distance?

g) Is there anything else you would like to say about training and studying at a distance?